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TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: SKIRMISHING WITHIN DC CONTINUES ON EVE OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

REF: ROME 16572

SUMMARY: THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS REMAIN AS DIVIDED AS EVER ON EVE OF IMPORTANT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING. WHILE CHANCES REMAIN BETTER THAN EVEN THAT OPEN RUPTURE BETWEEN LEFT OF CENTER ZACCAGNINI FORCES AND CENTER-RIGHT BLOCK LED BY PICCOLI, FANFANI AND ANDREOTTI CAN BE AVOIDED AT COUNCIL SESSION, MOST SOURCES PREDICT MEETING WILL BE VERY TENSE. COUNCIL EXPECTED TO VOTE FOR CONVOCAATION OF PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY AND OPEN POLICY DEBATE ON BASIS OF SCHEDULED ZACCAGNINI KEYNOTE SPEECH. IN ADDITION, COUNCIL EXPECTED TO GRAPPLE WITH THORNY QUESTION OF STATUTORY AMENDMENTS TO INCREASE REPRESENTATION OF DC ELECTORATE AT CONGRESS. TORTUOUS PROGRESS OF DC EFFORTS AT PARTY "RENEWAL" FIVE MONTHS AFTER JUNE 15 ELECTORAL SHOCK INDICATES DEPTH OF CRISIS WITHIN PARTY AND DANGER THAT RENEWAL EFFORTS MAY BE TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE.
END SUMMARY.

1. SKIRMISHING BETWEEN LEFT OF CENTER SUPPORTERS OF DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI AND CENTER-RIGHT BLOCK LED BY PICCOLI, FANFANI AND ANDREOTTI CONTINUES ON EVE OF
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IMPORTANT DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR

NOVEMBER 23. LATEST PUBLIC POLEMICS SPARKED BY NOVEMBER 16 ZACCAGNINI SPEECH AT CAPRIATE (BERGAMO) TO LOMBARDY DC ORGANIZATION IN WHICH HE DIVIDED PARTY INTO THOSE WISHING TO HOLD ONTO ESTABLISHED POWER POSITIONS AND THOSE, LIKE HIMSELF, REALLY WANTING PARTY RENEWAL. COMPARISON OF HIS STEWARDSHIP OF DC SINCE JUNE TO WARTIME LIBERATION STRUGGLE PARTICULARLY IRKED FANFANI AND PICCOLI SUPPORTERS WHO FELT ZACCAGNINI WAS INSINUATING HIS OPPONENTS COMPARABLE TO FASCISTS.

2. IN INTERVIEW GRANTED TO IL SETTIMANALE MAGAZINE BEFORE HE HAD READ ZACCAGNINI SPEECH, PICCOLI DENIED THAT HIS CENTRIST (DOROTEO) GROUP IS ATTACKING ZACCAGNINI AND EMPHASIZED THAT HE FAVORS CREATION OF A MAJORITY SUPPORTING A "POPULAR AND REFORMIST POLICY." HOWEVER, PICCOLI IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED ZACCAGNINI SUPPORTERS FOR HOLDING THAT "VIRTUE IS ON THE LEFT." ASKED ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD A FORLANI CANDIDACY FOR PARTY SECRETARY, PICCOLI EXPRESSED "ESTEEM" FOR FORLANI AND AGREEMENT WITH FORLANI'S POSITION THAT DC MUST STAY AT "CENTER" OF ITALIAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

3. AMID SPATE OF PRESS ARTICLES AND DC SOURCES REPORTING RISING TENSION WITHIN PARTY, INTERVIEW WITH FORLANI APPEARED IN LEFTIST WEEKLY L'ESPRESSO IN WHICH FORLANI STATED FIRMLY THAT HE IS NOT ACTIVELY SEEKING SECRETARYSHIP AND HAS NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN ATTACKS ON ZACCAGNINI. ALTHOUGH FORLANI LEFT DOOR OPEN TO POSSIBILITY THAT "OBJECTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES" MIGHT INDUCE HIM TO ACCEPT TASK AS PARTY CHIEF, HE EMPHASIZED HIS BELIEF THAT ZACCAGNINI CAN "PROCEED HAPPILY WITH HIS WORK IF HE AVOIDS FALLING PRISONER TO THE LOGIC OF GROUPS (FACTIONS)." PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW APPARENTLY WAS TO COUNTERACT PRESSURE FROM CENTER-RIGHT BLOC (AND PARTICULARLY PICCOLI) IN FAVOR OF AN IMMEDIATE MOVE TO OUST ZACCAGNINI, AND WARNING TO ZACCAGNINI NOT TO LINK HIMSELF TOO FIRMLY WITH PARTY LEFT-WING LEADERS LIKE GALLONI AND BODRATO.

4. DC SOURCES ARE PREDICTING THAT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE TENSE, BUT THAT ZACCAGNINI IS MORE LIKELY CONFIDENTIAL

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THAN NOT TO SURVIVE UNTIL THE CONGRESS. A MAJOR CONSTRAINT FACING HIS OPPONENTS IS RISK THAT ATTEMPT TO OUST HIM WOULD LIKELY PROVOKE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND ALIENATE IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF DC ELECTORATE.

5. MAJOR ISSUES TO BE FACED BY COUNCIL ARE SETTING OF CONGRESS DATE, POLICY DEBATE BASED ON KEYNOTE SPEECH BY ZACCAGNINI AND CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATION OF PARTY STATUTES TO PERMIT

GREATER REPRESENTATION OF DC ELECTORATE. IN ADDITION, COUNCIL MUST CHOOSE NEW PRESIDENT TO REPLACE ZACCAGNINI.

6. A PARTY SOURCE CLOSE TO ANDREOTTI PREDICTS THAT COUNCIL WILL PRODUCE MAJORITY VOTE IN FAVOR OF CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY (AS DESIRED BY CENTER-RIGHT BLOCK) AND THAT CONGRESS WILL SEE FORLANI TAKE OVER REINS OF PARTY AT THAT TIME WITH A LARGE (70-80 PERCENT) MAJORITY EFFECTIVELY ISOLATING PARTY LEFT WING. (NOTE: SOURCE ALSO SEES ANDREOTTI TAKING OVER AS PREMIER AFTER THIS CHANGE IN PARTY LEADERSHIP.)

7. ISSUE OF CHANGE IN PARTY STATUTES TO INCREASE VOICE OF DC ELECTORATE AT CONGRESS NOW BEING DEBATED BY SELECT COMMITTEE REPRESENTING ALL PARTY FACTIONS. IN BRIEF, CENTER-RIGHT OF PARTY WISHES TO INCREASE VOICE OF PARTY'S REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL. LEFT-OF-CENTER GROUP AGREES IN PRINCIPLE WITH THIS CHANGE (ADVOCATED IN PAST BY FANFANI) BUT ALSO WISHES TO BRING INTO PLAY WEIGHT OF ITS SUPPORTERS IN DC "COLLATERAL" ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS ACLI AND THE CISL LABOR UNION. ISSUE IS THORNY AND IMPORTANT ONE AND MAY NOT BE RESOLVED DURING NOVEMBER 23 COUNCIL SESSION.

8. PREDICTIONS ON NEW PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL CENTER ON OLD TIME BUT RESPECTED PARTY NOTABLE, GONELLA, CURRENTLY BACKED BY MAJORITY CENTER-RIGHT FORCES IN OPPOSITION TO ZACCAGNINI CANDIDATE: FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER TAVIANI. ALTHOUGH NATIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENCY HAS PRESTIGE BUT LITTLE POWER, WE CAN BE WELL-SATISFIED IF GONELLA RATHER THAN TAVIANI IS ELECTED.

9. COMMENT: CONTINUED FACTIONAL MANEUVERING AND BICKERING
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WITHIN DC RANKS ON EVE OF COUNCIL SESSION INDICATE DEPTHS OF CRISIS WITHIN PARTY. HOWEVER, MOST SOURCES DO NOT ANTICIPATE OPEN RUPTURE BETWEEN ZACCAGNINI AND HIS OPPONENTS AT NOVEMBER 23 COUNCIL SESSION. COMING FIVE MONTHS AFTER DRAMATIC COMMUNIST GAINS IN JUNE 15 ELECTIONS, COUNCIL RESULTS WILL BE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY WILL SET THE STAGE FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLICY DEBATE AT THE CRUCIAL PARTY CONGRESS. BEAUDRY

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